



## **Step up, speak up: Trail wants input**

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Published: June 16, 2010

Hickory -- Carolina Thread Trail organizers want you to talk the walk.

Drop-in meetings begin tonight in Hickory to discuss the county's Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan. People can look at the plan so far and weigh in on what they'd like the trail to include.

The Carolina Thread Trail is a proposed network of paths and greenways that would stretch through 15 counties. The plan is to link existing trails, regional attractions and historic sites.

Organizers had kickoff meetings in January with formal presentations.

This week's get-togethers will give folks an update on the plans so far.

"This is kind of checking back in," said Mary George, who works with the county's planning, parks and development office.

People who can't make the meetings can still have a say. After the sessions finish Thursday, the county will post a survey about the trail proposal on the planning section of its website, [www.catawbacountync.gov](http://www.catawbacountync.gov).

Among the spots residents have pointed to for inclusion on the trail are the Bunker Hill covered bridge and Murray's Mill. The master plan also takes in the existing greenway near Geitner-Rotary Park in Hickory, and the Heritage Trail in Newton.

Jeremy Barnes, a founder of the Hickory Outdoor Group, says he'd love to see the Hickory greenway extended.

Barnes moved to North Carolina from Michigan and said not everyone here realizes how lucky we are to have a wealth of outdoor opportunities — from skiing to fly-fishing.

He said he's happy anytime he hears about a project that would conserve green spaces.

"I think it's great for anything to come in and say, 'This is ours. We're going to protect it,'" he said.

Larry Hight is the president of the Catawba Valley Outing Club. He thinks more room for hiking, walking and general exercise can only be good news.

"I think by opening up more trails around here, where we have more flat land, more local people will start hiking," he said. "I think it would make them more likely to try it."

<http://www2.hickoryrecord.com/content/2010/jun/16/step-speak-trail-wants-input/news/>